

Regional: Lt. Gov. Garamendi tours California to promote marine debris report

CBS 5 (July 25, 2008)

Lt. Governor John Garamendi finished a tour of California beaches today by meeting with environmental groups in San Francisco to promote a report he spearheaded on marine debris in the state.

Garamendi wrapped up his tour of various state beaches with a meeting at 4:30 p.m. today at Crissy Field Beach after meetings in San Diego and Santa Monica beaches earlier in the day.

On the tour, Garamendi said that a report to be released by the Ocean Protection Council would help lead the way to tougher state laws that would clean up California's seas and beaches while working with cities and counties to ban and restrict pollutants.

"It is time to take the issue of cleaning up our beaches and ocean to a higher level by making sure state laws are passed in a cohesive way to get the job done," Garamendi said in a prepared statement. "Right now the state laws are interfering with cities and counties. We must work together to move forward."

Garamendi asked for the marine debris report as chairman of the state's Lands Commission and as a member of the Ocean Protection Council. The report was scheduled to be released today but was delayed due to budget negotiations, according to Garamendi's office.

Garamendi's office pointed to several marine habitat problems in California that need to be attended to, such as the 1 million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals and countless fish killed each year from entanglement in marine debris.

The lieutenant governor met with several environmental groups, including Coastkeeper, Surfrider, Heal the Bay, Baykeeper, Environment California and the Plastic Waste Reduction Campaign.

"We are pleased with the leadership role the lieutenant governor and the Ocean Protection Council have taken on marine debris pollution and we hope this report helps convince legislators and the governor that this is something that needs to move forward sooner than later," Plastic Waste Reduction Campaign coordinator Bryan Early said.

